

Assistant to the DL/I (Planning)

31 December 1954

MEMO : Assistant Director for Operations

Chief, Foreign Documents Division, OO

Captured Japanese Language Documents Held by CIA Library

1. Reference is made to the meeting called by you at 1430 hours on 29 December 1954 in the OOD Conference Room on this subject. This memorandum is in response to your request at that meeting that I comment on the memorandum from Chief, Support Staff, Economic Research Area, OOR to you, dated 9 December 1954, same subject.

2. I believe the covering memorandum calls for no comment, so I shall proceed to attachment A to that memorandum:

a. Paragraph 2 states that the [] survey was undertaken in the interests of making economic information and intelligence on the Soviet Union more readily available to the economists in the Economic Research Area and that it represents a thorough, extensive and systematic survey of the captured Japanese materials dealing exclusively with the USSR. Unfortunately, [] survey was not thorough in that it failed to bring out the extensive exploitation of these documents by the Foreign Documents Division, thus not bringing to the attention of the Economic Research Area, OOR, the tremendous volume of information already on file in English. It was furthermore not thorough in that the [] survey states that there are some sixteen thousand documents now housed in Foreign Branch and that only eleven thousand were surveyed.

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b. In paragraph 1.7 F. on page 2, statement is made, that of the eighteen titles concerning gold in the [] survey, none had been exploited in any manner and of one 340 titles in the complete survey, only 32 had been exploited according to a check made with the Consolidated Translation Survey file. There has been a failure here to understand and recognize the distinction between translation, exploitation, and research. At the time that the captured Japanese documents under discussion were handled for intelligence purposes, we believe, that rather thorough research and exploitation was conducted in all these documents for economic information. In the captured Japanese documents, there were primary, secondary, and tertiary source materials. In the conduct of the research to elicit information of economic intelligence value, obviously the best and most authoritative information was selected. Hence, many documents which

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contained duplicative information or which were less authoritative than others were discarded. Secondly, in conducting the search on a given subject, facts and information were collated from many sources. Thus, in a given book or document only one paragraph might have had information of value. Consequently, only a small percentage were considered valid for full translation. The Consolidated Translation Survey file will only contain those documents for which there were complete or extensive translations, thus the file is not valid for checking exploitation or research. The CTS file was established to save the Government money by avoiding duplicate expense of time and money in complete or extensive translations of foreign language documents. It is then, by no means, an index file to exploitation of foreign language documents. For example, none of the work of IDO or other agencies in the exploitation of newspapers, except an occasionally long and significant article, will appear in the CTS file. No saving of money to the Government could be shown if such a file were maintained because the cost of indexing and filing the hundreds of newspaper articles exploited each day would far outweigh the occasional reference to such a file. Furthermore, it is our understanding that the indexing of intelligence information is the function of the Office of Collection and Dissemination. Failure then to recognize and understand the precise function of the CTS file lead to the quite inaccurate conclusion indicated in this paragraph of attachment A.

c. Paragraph 2 is concerned with whether the documents in the Library of Congress were of a "cultural nature." I feel that the error here lies in the Foreign Branch report. Undoubtedly they referred to the 1945 directive to the Washington Document Center on the disposal of the documents to the Library of Congress. The original directive called for disposal of documents of a "cultural nature" to the Library of Congress. However, there was failure to note that there were subsequent directives after the Washington Document Center was transferred to the Central Intelligence Group along with the custody of the documents and the function of exploiting them for the intelligence community. The subsequent directives were to the effect that the documents were to be thoroughly screened and exploited for information of intelligence value and those part of such value were to be transferred to permanent US Government depositories, such as the Library of Congress and the National Archives. Accordingly, large quantities of material of historical nature and documents which were duplicative or for which there were

more authoritative documents were screened out and so transferred. Hence, it is normal that any survey of the captured Japanese documents in the Library of Congress would yield many intriguing titles.

d. Paragraph 3 notes inconsistencies in percentage distribution by area as reported by Foreign Branch and the Kaynor survey. Yet, [] states that he only surveyed eleven thousand of sixteen thousand volumes or roughly two-thirds of the collection in Foreign Branch and does not indicate that he employed any systematic sampling technique. It seems to me quite understandable then under these conditions that estimation of percentage distribution by area could vary quite widely. Until a thorough survey is made, I would accept the custodian, Foreign Branch, figures.

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3. I believe attachment B to be a good and accurate picture of the situation in regard to captured Japanese documents with the following exceptions:

a. Paragraph D states that documents transferred to the Library of Congress were of a cultural type, my comment on this has already been registered above.

b. Paragraph F states that the exploitation was done under the broad directives of the Army and Navy. It should be clarified that broad in this case really means comprehensive in that the exploitation was conducted in accord with the detailed specifications of the Department of the Army's Basic Intelligence Directive.

c. Paragraph I refers to the further exploitation of present holdings. It is perhaps obvious from the fact that these documents were held that there was a need for further exploitation of them. I think this decision was valid when made in 1948. At that time I prepared a memorandum to the Assistant Director for Collection and Dissemination and the Assistant Director for Reports and Estimates proposing long term plans for the complete exploitation of these holdings. I was informed at that time that there was a far greater need for the exploitation of current material and that the manpower available should be employed so as to complete current priority projects on captured documents and then convert as rapidly as possible to the exploitation of current materials. That direction was followed. Now the present holdings are six years older and most of the information in these captured Japanese documents is fifteen years old, none of it less than ten years old. I believe now these documents require a reappraisal in the light

of their age, current and estimated future needs, information already available from other sources, preferability of other current sources both documentary and otherwise, and the estimate of manpower and money required for their exploitation.

h. The following comments are made on attachment G, the [] survey:

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a. It is interesting to note that although the footnote on page 1 states that Washington Document Center was converted into FDD/OC and in the second paragraph on page 1 it is parenthetically noted that Foreign Branch was formerly part of FDD, [] only consulted one file (the CTS) and did not consult the responsible officers in FDD who had experience with what had been done with captured Japanese documents eight to ten years previously. This may have been due to a failure to understand the function of the CTS file which I have commented on above, but nevertheless, it does indicate an incompleteness in research method and failing to consult readily available and responsible sources of information, thus the survey failed almost completely in attaining its second objective (II A.2) "to determine the degree of exploitation of these documents."

b. [] states in paragraph B.1 page 2 and 3 that four thousand items dealing with the USSR have been retrieved from the collection of the Library of Congress and that arrangements have been made for other items to be set aside as they are processed. If he had consulted with responsible officers in FDD first, I feel sure he would have found this to be unnecessary work. Furthermore, I feel it would only have been appropriate that if such an arrangement or agreement were made, speaking for CIA, that it should have been made known to the Foreign Documents Division, inasmuch as they have the responsibility and function of exploitation of these documents.

c. Paragraph II B.2 deals with exploitation. This delineates the method used in the survey for checking, which was purely for translations against the CTS file. I have stated at some length above the purpose of this file and how the failure to recognize the true function of this file lead to inaccurate conclusions.

d. The following comments are devoted to attachment D:

a. Paragraph 2 draws the conclusion from the [] survey that only a very small portion of the captured documents dealing with the USSR have been processed for exploitation. This is not true. To summarize again, [] failed to contact responsible officers in FDD to determine what exploitation had been made. To

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determine the degree of exploitation, he merely consulted a translation file and asked whether any documents on the extensive list of 840 items had been translated. As explained above, the translation file is simply a file of translations, if such translations are complete or extensive. It is not an exploitation file. Accordingly only 32 documents on the list were found translated. This does not mean that the others were not exploited. In fact, to our knowledge, 90 to 95 percent of the documents dealing with the economy of the USSR were exploited, and, subject wise, only the fishing industry of the USSR was not covered. Accordingly in our opinion this conclusion is far from accurate.

6. I sincerely regret that this survey, through possibly hurried and obviously unintentional procedural errors, brought about faulty conclusions, for if it had been coordinated with us it could have produced undoubtedly very worthwhile results. However, to avoid what I feel would be needless Agency duplication in research in these materials I feel it necessary to comment factually and perhaps a bit bluntly throughout this memorandum so that you may be fully informed of the true situation.

J. J. MARSHALL

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